

What is Claimed is:

Sub B7 1. An interactive television program guide system in which an interactive television program guide is at least partially implemented on user equipment of a user, comprising:

means for supplying program listings to the interactive television program guide;

means for supplying information on certain simple categories of programming and certain combination categories of programming that are associated with the program listings;

means for displaying a selectable list of the simple categories and combination categories on the user equipment with the interactive television program guide; and

means for searching for program listings with the interactive television program guide that match a given category selected from the selectable list by the user and displaying the matching program listings with the interactive television program guide on the user equipment.

2. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising:

a main facility at which the program listings are assigned certain ones of the combination categories each of which is composed of certain ones of the simple categories using a combination category build process in which a number of simple categories associated with each program listing are compared to a list of supported combination categories and a given

combination category is assigned to each program listing when the simple categories associated with that program listing match the simple categories from which the given combination category is composed.

3. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1, further comprising:

means for supplying a list of supported combination categories, wherein the means for displaying a selectable list of the simple categories and combination categories comprises means for displaying the categories based on the list of supported combination categories.

4. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for searching for program listings and displaying the matching program listings further comprises means for displaying the matching program listings in a display that only contains matching program listings.

5. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for searching for program listings and displaying the matching program listings further comprises means for distinctively displaying the matching program listings in a display that contains matching and nonmatching program listings.

6. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 5 wherein the means for distinctively displaying further comprises means for

displaying the matching program listings in a distinctive color.

7. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 5 wherein the means for distinctively displaying further comprises means for displaying the matching program listings with distinctive labels.

8. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list.

9. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to select a given programming category and to designate an order of placement on the selectable list for that given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the selected given programming category in the designated order.

10. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to delete a given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the given programming category deleted.

11. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for

allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to select a given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the given programming category reordered to the top of the selectable list.

12. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for automatically rearranging the selectable list with the program guide based on how frequently the user selects certain categories from the selectable list.

13. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for allowing the user to designate certain categories as favorites.

14. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 13 further comprising means for displaying the selectable list of categories based on the selected favorite categories.

15. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is personal computer equipment.

16. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is user television equipment.

17. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising:

a television distribution facility connected to the user equipment for providing the program listings and television programming to the user equipment.

18. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the program listings are provided to the user equipment over the Internet.

19. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein at least one of the simple categories is selected from the group consisting of sports, comedy, news, children's programming, movies, and adult programming.

20. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein at least one of the combination categories is selected from the group consisting of sports-comedy, sports-baseball, comedy-movies, comedy-series, and horror-movies.

21. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1, wherein each one of categories in the selectable list of the simple categories and combination categories has at least one program listing associated with the category.

22. An interactive television program guide system comprising:

an interactive television program guide at least partially implemented on user television equipment of a user configured to display a selectable

list of certain simple categories of programming and certain combination categories of programming that are associated with program listings on the user equipment, to search for program listings that match a given category selected from the selectable list by the user, and to display the matching program listings with the interactive television program guide on the user equipment; and

distribution equipment configured to supply the program listings to the interactive television program guide and to supply the information on the simple categories and the combination categories of programming.

23. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 further comprising:

a main facility at which the program listings are assigned certain ones of the combination categories each of which is composed of certain ones of the simple categories using a combination category build process in which a number of simple categories associated with each program listing are compared to a list of supported combination categories and a given combination category is assigned to each program listing when the simple categories associated with that program listing match the simple categories from which the given combination category is composed.

24. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22, further comprising:

a main facility that supplies a list of supported combination categories, wherein the

interactive television program guide is configured to display the categories based on the list of supported combination categories.

25. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to display the matching program listings in a display that only contains matching program listings.

26. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to distinctively display the matching program listings in a display that contains matching and nonmatching program listings.

27. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 26 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to display the matching program listings in a distinctive color.

28. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 26 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to display the matching program listings with distinctive labels.

29. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to allow the user to rearrange the selectable list.

30. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to allow the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to select a given programming category and to designate an order of placement on the selectable list for that given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the selected given programming category in the designated order.

31. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to allow the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to delete a given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the given programming category deleted.

32. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to allow the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to select a given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the given programming category reordered to the top of the selectable list.

33. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to automatically rearrange the selectable list with the program guide

based on how frequently the user selects certain categories from the selectable list.

34. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein interactive television program guide is configured to allow the user to designate certain categories as favorites.

Sub a) 35. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 31 further wherein the interactive television program guide is configured to display the selectable list of categories based on the selected favorite categories.

36. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the user equipment is personal computer equipment.

37. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the user equipment is user television equipment.

38. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 further comprising:
a television distribution facility connected to the user equipment for providing the program listings and television programming to the user equipment.

39. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein the program listings are provided to the user equipment over the Internet.

40. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein at least one of the simple categories is selected from the group consisting of sports, comedy, news, children's programming, movies, and adult programming.

41. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22 wherein at least one of the combination categories is selected from the group consisting of sports-comedy, sports-baseball, comedy-movies, comedy-series, and horror-movies.

42. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 22, wherein each one of categories in the selectable list of the simple categories and combination categories has at least one program listing associated with the category.

43. A method for using an interactive television program guide system in which an interactive television program guide is at least partially implemented on user equipment of a user, comprising:

supplying program listings to the interactive television program guide;

supplying information on certain simple categories of programming and certain combination categories of programming that are associated with the program listings;

displaying a selectable list of the simple categories and combination categories on the user equipment with the interactive television program guide; and

searching for program listings with the interactive television program guide that match a given category selected from the selectable list by the user and displaying the matching program listings with the interactive television program guide on the user equipment.

44. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

assigning to the program listings certain ones of the combination categories each of which is composed of certain ones of the simple categories using a combination category build process in which a number of simple categories associated with each program listing are compared to a list of supported combination categories and a given combination category is assigned to each program listing when the simple categories associated with that program listing match the simple categories from which the given combination category is composed.

45. The method defined in claim 43, further comprising:

supplying a list of supported combination categories, wherein the displaying the selectable list of the simple categories and combination categories comprises displaying the categories based on the list of supported combination categories.

46. The method defined in claim 43 wherein searching for program listings and displaying the

matching program listings further comprises displaying the matching program listings in a display that only contains matching program listings.

47. The method defined in claim 43 wherein searching for program listings and displaying the matching program listings further comprises distinctively displaying the matching program listings in a display that contains matching and nonmatching program listings.

Sub A7 48. The method defined in claim 42 wherein distinctively displaying further comprises displaying the matching program listings in a distinctive color.

49. The method defined in claim 42 wherein distinctively displaying further comprises displaying the matching program listings with distinctive labels.

50. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list.

51. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to select a given programming category and to designate an order of placement on the selectable list for that given programming category and by redisplaying the

selectable list with the selected given programming category in the designated order.

52. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to delete a given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the given programming category deleted.

53. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

allowing the user to rearrange the selectable list by providing an option for the user to select a given programming category and by redisplaying the selectable list with the given programming category reordered to the top of the selectable list.

54. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

automatically rearranging the selectable list with the program guide based on how frequently the user selects certain categories from the selectable list.

55. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

allowing the user to designate certain categories as favorites.

56. The method defined in claim 55 further comprising:

displaying the selectable list of categories based on the selected favorite categories.

57. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

providing a television distribution facility connected to the user equipment for providing the program listings and television programming to the user equipment.

58. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

providing the program listings to the user equipment over the Internet.

59. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

selecting at least one of the simple categories from the group consisting of sports, comedy, news, children's programming, movies, and adult programming.

60. The method defined in claim 43 further comprising:

selecting at least one of the combination categories is selected from the group consisting of sports-comedy, sports-baseball, comedy-movies, comedy-series, and horror-movies.

61. The method defined in claim 43, wherein
the displaying the selectable list of the simple
categories and combination categories comprises
displaying each of one of the categories having at
least one program listing associated with the category.

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